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ADDRESS AT HARTFORD,  
BEFORE THE DELEGATES TO THE  
**DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION OF THE YOUNG MEN  
OF CONNECTICUT,**  
ON THE  
**EVENING OF FEBRUARY 18, 1840,**  
BY GEORGE BANCROFT.

Published in Conformity to a Vote of the Convention.

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FELLOW CITIZENS :

THE invitation to meet you this evening was accepted with pleasure ; nor do I stand as among strangers. The people of New England have a common lineage, and a common inheritance. From the days when our fathers first encountered the temptations of the wilderness, when they repelled the invasions of ruthless barbarians, or resisted the tyranny of an Andros, or protected themselves against inroads from Canada, or braved the emissaries of despotism on Bunker Hill, or advocated independence on the floor of Congress, the counsels and the efforts of Massachusetts and Connecticut have been united. Of the study of the virtues of your ancestors I never grow weary ; and I speak from deep and well-considered conviction, when I declare my belief, that, for purity of morals, for freedom and humanity as illustrated in a progressive legislation, for the wide diffusion of intelligence, and the consequent rapid increase of numbers, and of public happiness, the Connecticut of old times had not its parallel.

There seemed also a propriety, at the present time, that some one from Massachusetts should address you. Men ask, almost with amazement, if Massachusetts is indeed firmly established as a democratic state. But a little reflection will, at least throughout New England, remove surprise. The institutions bequeathed to us by our ancestors, both in Massachusetts and here, are so deeply tinged with the popular character, as to prove, that of old the principle of democracy lived among our fathers, and inspired their legislation. The people of Massachusetts have, from my earliest recollection, been democratic : but in an evil hour their energies were lulled by the cry, that they had won the victory, and might repose in the consciousness of an undisputed triumph ; and while the people slumbered in confiding security, the aristocratic influence first begged permission to amalgamate, and then usurped the ascendancy. But it is the nature of all evil to punish itself. The aristocratic influence, having held dominion for fifteen years, had made the chief action of the legislature consist in passing special laws for the benefit of individuals ; had, with flagrant indifference to justice and to shame, asserted to individual stockholders and directors in corporations the power of voting, as members of the legislature, for the grant of new franchises to themselves ; had sacrificed the productive labor of New England, by upholding a cunningly devised financial system, that made all American capital subservient to foreign capital, and the interests of our own manufacturers subordinate to those of foreigners ; had multiplied banks, and at last attempted to charter a mammoth bank of ten millions, — which, by the mercy of God, was defeated through the intense effort of the democratic minority ; — had, by an act of legislation, virtually sanctioned the suspension of pay-

ments by the banks ; had stretched out the unhallowed hand of political ambition to uphold the ark of the Most High, and rested the cause of temperance on an arm of flesh ; had narrowed the rights of electors, by prescribing to them unjust and unnecessary, and it may be unconstitutional, formalities ; and had, for the benefit of corporations, mortgaged all the farms and real estate of the Commonwealth to an amount about equal to the whole debt incurred by Massachusetts for the war of Independence.

The aristocratic influence had revealed itself to the people in its own natural deformity. The young men in many of our villages, almost without one single exception, raised the democratic standard, and the good ship Massachusetts has been put once more on the republican tack, and this time with a faithful pilot at the helm. To doubt the issue would be to admit into our hearts a little of that distrust of the people, for which our opponents are entitled to a monopoly. The democracy of Massachusetts confides in the people, and, ever true to its good cause, in reverent hope lifts its eyes upwards.

And what is that principle, which has thus been able, year after year, to advance in the affections of New England, and, in spite of the immense political activity of associated wealth, to gain a victory in the Bay State ? To-night I shall speak to you of the PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRACY, of its FORMS, and of its TENDENCIES ; and in discussing a subject of deepest interest to every freeman in the land, I shall deem my words rashly spoken, unless they are confirmed by your concurrence.

I. Lay your hand on your heart. It throbs. Here, standing among democrats, I may say, it throbs warmly. The farmer behind the plough feels it beat in harmony with the creation through which he moves. Go out into the crowded streets, you will every where find, that there is no shrivelled miser, no selfish epicure, no ambitious politician, no "incarnation of fat dividends," but he has a heart. Seek whom you will, the benevolent or the selfish, the highminded or the mean, the most wise or the most narrow, each one has a heart, though sometimes, on dissection, it might require a microscope to find its place.

Just so the power to discern good from evil, right from wrong, is implanted within every one. It is the gift of God to every man. God has disfranchised no one ; He has cut off not one from the inheritance of reason. Wherever there is moral existence, wherever there is a human being, there also is found the gift of mind. There, within the depths of conscience, Virtue has erected her tribunal ; there an arbiter is established to decree what, in the face of humanity and of the Infinite Mind, shall be acknowledged as justice.

Democracy is, therefore, the Power of Justice, as cherished in the hearts of the people, as interpreted and enforced by the public mind.

I know it will be said, that the power of the people will not, of necessity, be the government of justice.

To whom, then, but to the whole people, shall we look for the true interpretation of justice ? If not to the whole people, we must look to a fraction of the people. Now, there is a primary objection to making this appeal to any fraction whatever. For by the very fact that it is a fraction, it has a separate interest. The fraction asks itself, "How will this look on the exchange, and among the members of the clan?" The people can only ask itself, "How will this look in the history of the race, and before the Creator of man?" If I appeal to the whole people, I shall get an answer in harmony with general truth ; if I appeal to a part of the

people, the answer will be partial, modified by peculiarities and a special bias. To take the decision away from the whole community, implies an unwillingness to have an answer resting on universal truth.

But let us analyze this matter more minutely. If the expression of the public mind is not to be acknowledged as the interpreter of justice, and we are to look to a fraction, that fraction must be the purest, or the strongest, or the wealthiest, or the wisest.

If we look to the purest for oracles of justice, we at once get as a political power a priesthood or a church. We get an aristocracy of priests, or an aristocracy of church members. How unwise the first is, has been ploughed deeply into the history of mankind. For the political exaltation of a priesthood brings with it a concession of a monopoly of moral truth. It binds the mind in fetters; it proclaims the slavery of the soul; thus destroying freedom at its source, and with freedom destroying the possibility of public virtue and justice. New England has had an example of an aristocracy of church members, in the early history of Massachusetts; and the record of its fatal tendency is written in acts of bigotry, and in letters of blood. Besides: let no man, however pure,—and the truly pious man is always humble,—be so arrogant as to claim in piety a superiority to the people; for the people includes within itself all the purity and piety of all its members.

The aristocracy of the strongest has also been tried. It is the feudal system, and the system of each modern military despotism, giving dominion to brute force. It is the system which despises freedom, and annihilates mind. This form of aristocracy, far from aspiring to interpret justice, aims only at asserting its own will.

The fraction of the wealthy next urges its claim. This claim is more frequently maintained. It is the part of wisdom to found government on property, says Webster, giving utterance to the creed of our American modern whigs. The poet Addison, once secretary of state, was a good English whig in his day. He maintained the same opinion. And John Locke, the great philosopher of the whigs, declares the very design and object of government to be the protection of property.

Now, to every rich man there are two things:—First, he is a man: as such, democracy respects him, and gives him equal rights. Next is his wealth; but wealth is blind. It cannot reason, and it cannot feel. The money-bag has neither heart nor mind. The love of riches is a base passion. If government is surrendered to it, then the question will be, “What will be said of this measure by the speculators in real estate? What will be thought of it by the bears and bulls in the stock-market?” Therefore Democracy rejects the government of wealth. She insists on putting the question, not to note-shavers and money-makers, not to those who are rich, and are struggling to grow richer, but to conscience and to mind.

The fraction of the learned comes next—the wise men after the flesh. But the people collectively is wiser than they, for it includes within itself their wisdom also. And further: Excellent as men of learning are in their place, I should be loath to resign the government of the country into the hands of college professors or the learned of the land. For learning has a pride and an arrogance of its own. Besides, the pedant’s chair may hold every passion, mean as well as noble, that human nature knows. It is a remarkable fact, that the great progress in science and government has not been made at universities. Our fathers were outcasts from the universities; and Oxford in England taught the doctrine of passive obedience to

kings, long after Hooker and Haynes had founded government in Connecticut on undivided obedience to God. When the angel of advancing reform knocks at the gate of our colleges, he is too often met with a rebuff, and compelled, as in the days of the patriarch, to go out and break bread with the herdsman beneath a tree. And though a hearty sympathy with popular liberty is the sole condition on which an American scholar can hope for enduring fame, or a college can attain highest success, it still proves hard for the very learned to acknowledge that learning is but a cistern, and that in every mind there is a living fountain of truth. Therefore it is that Lord Bacon holds it necessary for the inquirer to become as a little child, or he cannot hope to enter into the kingdom of intelligence ; and we have good authority for believing that Heaven, in its high purposes of reform, selects for its agents not many wise after the flesh. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

Thus Justice refuses to plead before a fraction of the people. She establishes her open tribunal, and seeks a decree in harmony with conscience and the voice of God, by appointing the whole people as the umpire and sovereign arbiter. Her court is an open court. Thither may repair the oppressor and the oppressed ; the poor and the rich ; the wise after the flesh, and the chosen of God, whose wisdom is as that of children ; the strong and the weak ; the learned and the unlearned ; the benevolent and the churl. All are admitted, all are heard ; but the decision is the voice of conscience as expressed by the common mind ; the voice of God "as it breathes through the people :" the power is to the people.

In this judgment of the people, the several fractions indeed appear and are heard. But the influence of those fractions is merged in the general influence. The excesses of one class cancel the excesses of the other.

Just so geographically. The voice of universal reason, in Massachusetts, is sometimes affected by the clamor of associated wealth ; at the South, by a selfishness of an opposite tendency. The errors balance each other. As in algebra, the minus and the plus, if equal, neutralize each other. Thus it is that the voice of the people is the voice of pure reason ; opposite, unjust passions balancing each other, justice emerges.

Give power to a fraction of the people, and you have a partial exposition of justice. Give power to the whole people, and you gain the nearest expression of the law of God, the voice of conscience, the oracle of universal reason.

Thus, then, we see, that the moral law is graven on the heart of every man ; that, while each individual has personal biases and passions, the universal principles of the moral law exist in every man ; that, therefore, to gain institutions and laws founded upon universal reason and universal justice, the appeal must be made to the whole people.

This is the democratic principle. Democracy is ETERNAL JUSTICE, RULING THROUGH THE PEOPLE.

II. The PRINCIPLE of democracy, of itself, dictates the FORMS under which it establishes itself in the fundamental laws.

And here the character of democracy exhibits itself at the very beginning. For, on what basis does government rest ?

A respectable and very ambitious party represent that the people meet in convention, and form a compact ; that this compact at once obtains a

character of sanctity, and that it constitutes the basis on which society rests. This is the whig doctrine. It rests government not on any thing that is in man, but on parchments and title deeds.

This theory gives no higher authority to government, than the accident of agreement; it is, therefore, essentially relative, and is remote from the high idea of justice in its origin, as in its character. A party adopting this theory may look for safety to checks and balances; it cannot invoke a higher sanction: it may have maxims; it never can have principles.

And here is the reason why the whig party has no faith. Whiggism gives sanctity to the form, and not to the principle which led to the adoption of the form. It adheres to the letter, and neglects the spirit; and the dead letter cannot inspire faith. Whiggism values forms in themselves, because they may be used as so many checks on the people.

Is it denied that the whigs prefer forms to the substance? Have we not seen, in Massachusetts, an executive council refuse to bend their ear to hear the voices of the yeomanry and hardy mechanics of Westfield, and reject a vote of which the accuracy was undisputed, because the town clerk wrote his name in the centre of the fourth page, instead of on a corner of the third? Have we not seen the whole whig party claiming on the floor of Congress for a broad seal, under a notoriously false record, a higher power than for the voice of the Commonwealth, as registered at its polls and preserved in its archives?

Or, is it denied that the whigs have no faith in their own cause? That they have not faith, is evident from a flood of reasons. They appeal to the passions of men, and not to their reason. They are perpetually stimulating the minions of calumny to the work of personal defamation. As if ashamed of themselves, they are perpetually attempting to wear democracy as a mask. They dare not present to the people, as candidates for high offices, the men who most adequately represent their party. The doings of the late convention of whigs at Harrisburg are fraught with a sublime moral. By not daring to ask the suffrages of the people for Henry Clay, the gifted champion of their cause, they themselves made a confession in advance that they deserve defeat, that a true representative of the whig party is not an available candidate. To them, availability consists in that happy mediocrity, which, from its own weakness, has escaped being identified with any prominent measure whatever.

Democracy, on the other hand, regards government as springing from the necessity implanted in man's nature. Wherever there are human beings, wherever there are intelligent life and freedom, there, also, the inward voice of God in the soul commands society to be instituted. Society exists of necessity, and from God; and rests primarily on the law of justice imprinted on man's heart, long before a parchment was scrawled upon, or a constitution devised. Society rests on immutable justice; and justice, like all moral truth, lives not in books, not in letters of black and white, not in archives or compacts, but in the souls of men.

When the people assemble in convention to settle the forms of government, they do not create government, they only institute it. The office of the members of a convention is, to inquire what justice commands. They do not arbitrarily create forms; they do but ask after the forms which are best adapted to the great ends of society. And not claiming for themselves infallibility, they do not regard their work as an inviolable compact, but as an institution to be amended, reformed, and perfected, as fast as the increase of knowledge and uprightness shall demand.

Thus democracy rests government on the strongest possible foundation ; —on the law of God in the soul of man. It seeks to establish fundamental laws, in conformity to the immutable principles of never-changing justice. And as the race is constantly advancing in intelligence, democracy secures to the people the right to make constant progress in the form of government. Thus the people have taken care to provide a method for amending the constitution of the United States ; and in our own bill of rights, it is energetically declared, that "The people have an incontestable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to institute government, and to reform, alter, or totally change the same." This is the great doctrine of progress, as applied to the Union and the Commonwealth.

In framing a constitution, democracy demands, that, in every branch of government, that system shall be adopted which permits the most ready and certain career to the expression of the public conviction. *The form which leaves power nearest the people, is the form chosen by democracy.*

First, then, it asserts the doctrine of universal franchise in the election of legislators. The whole people must participate in the appointing power, and must participate in it directly.

In the next place, when elections have been made by the people, democracy respects them. It gets up no Ritner rebellions : it adds up the column of figures accurately and promptly, and does not delay its report for week after week, in the vain hope that some new discoveries may be made in the science of counting nicely.

The legislators thus elected are but trustees of the people ; therefore responsible ; and swift responsibility is secured by frequent elections. Here we, of New England, have cause of gratitude to our forefathers.

If office is a burden, it should not be forced upon a few ; if it be a benefit, it should be dispensed as widely as possible. To this end democracy enjoins rotation in office.

Further, the legislator is but the servant or trustee of the people ; therefore he is bound to obey instructions from the people. Does he prove false to his professions and promises ? Let him be reproved by his masters. Does he turn against their interests or their rights ? Let him learn to obey his sovereign.

The Quakers who settled West New Jersey, were good democrats. They established the right of instruction as a part of their laws ; and gave to each elector the power of presenting himself in the legislative body, and, face to face, of arraigning the recreant representative who should prove false to his bond.

I know it is said this doctrine of instruction interferes with the deliberative character of the representative body. The answer to this is, that laws are to express the convictions of the people ; that the representative, if he has a good purpose, can undertake to explain it to his constituents. When a legislator asserts his own will against the will of his constituents, he becomes the exponent of the smallest possible fraction, to wit, himself. — Besides, legislation, to be abiding, must represent the will of the people ; the security, therefore, and the honesty of legislation are both promoted by the doctrine of instructions. Without this, there is no check upon the personal passions, or peculiar schemes, of the individual representative.

The representative, chosen for a season, soon to go into retirement, may have selfish purposes. Hence a second limitation. Democracy holds him not only responsible to the people, but circumscribes his power within the strict boundaries marked out for him. It reserves rights to

the individual, rights to the state, rights to the collective people; and the legislator who dares to step beyond them, does but make himself guilty of a usurpation, which is in itself null and void. Hence the rights of personal freedom, of individual freedom of mind, are reserved rights; hence the inalienable, indefeasible rights, which no legislation can create or abrogate; hence state rights, which, rightly construed and applied, are a cherished portion of our liberties; hence the doctrine in our national constitution, that powers not conceded — that, for instance, of chartering a bank, or granting a monopoly — are never to be exercised.

The legislature, when assembled, is but a transient body; it can, therefore, never give immortality to its acts. Whatever laws it establishes are liable to be repealed. It can establish no perpetuities. Democracy knows nothing, recognizes nothing, as a perpetuity, but the law of God. All the forms and enactments of legislation are the work of man's hand, and are perishable like man.

Once more: Democracy is eternal justice, ruling through the people. Hence democracy demands equal laws for the general good; hence democracy tolerates no monopolies. They are at war with providence, which always acts by general laws. The law of God knows no distinction of persons; and just so democracy, in its legislation, acts without fear and without favor; it abrogates all privileges; it forbids all monopolies; and it establishes the equal rights of the people on the sure rock of Divine truth.

In organizing the judiciary, democracy is equally vigilant: First, by circumscribing the subjects on which judgment is to be rendered. There may arise, in civil suits, two classes of questions. One relates merely to property as such, and to contracts between man and man. These belong to the judiciary to decide. And there is no danger that this power will be seriously abused. But there is another class, which involves political questions; and here democracy imperatively reserves to the people the ultimate decision of every political question, and also refuses to the judiciary all participation in legislative power. The judges are the ministers of the law, not the tribunes of the people.

Just so in criminal suits. The judges are to act under existing laws, but cannot of themselves constitute crimes. They have no power to enlarge or to alter the criminal code.

Democracy asserts the concurrent power of the jury. It claims for the jury the right of deciding on the law, as well as on the fact. The jury is the organ through which the people qualify and restrict the otherwise arbitrary and nearly irresponsible power of the bench.

Again: Democracy insists upon the responsibility of the judiciary to the people. And this it secures, and can secure, only by limiting their tenure of office. In your Commonwealth, a judge is liable to be dismissed by an address of two thirds; and, in the general government, a vote of two thirds is needed to give effect to an impeachment. This provision is entirely nugatory. The better way is to restrict the term of office. Then responsibility becomes perfect, by the prospect of reappointment. The good judge need not fear the people. From the avowed convictions of the late President, at the time of the appointment, I infer, that it is the opinion of the present Chief Justice of the United States that the term of the judicial office should be limited, and not be for life.

Finally: Democracy does not allow of appeals from a final judicial decision, in a mere question of property; but every improper or unjust

exposition of law can be reformed by legislation ; and the whole system can be amended, altered, and reformed, by the people in convention.

I have thus traced the forms of democracy through the legislature and the judiciary ; it remains to explain them with regard to the executive.

In the first place, democracy claims the right of electing the chief magistrate directly by the people. Thus, throughout New England, we vote directly for the governor. In some states, the governor is chosen by the legislature. To this democracy objects ; for it leads to selfish intrigues and cabals.

Again : The legislature expresses the will of the people by laws ; the executive enforces it. The powers become blended, and, by a law of universal efficacy, the aristocratic influence gains a new chance of securing power, when the legislature appoints the executive.

The chief magistrate obtains a proper independence, and a proper responsibility, by receiving his appointment directly from the people.

The supreme executive is, moreover, a check upon the legislature, and should, therefore, derive his power directly from the people.

Hence the recent changes in the constitution of North Carolina and of Maryland, by which the choice of governor is transferred from legislatures to the people, is strictly a democratic triumph.

So, too, in the choice of president, to vote for electors directly by the people, and not through the legislature, is the democratic rule.

And here is the reason why democracy opposes the throwing of the choice of president of the United States into Congress. It is because Congress, by electing the president, constitutes itself his author. It is because members of Congress, in making a president, may have private purposes. It is because Congress may be distracted by selfish intrigues, and so, after weeks and months of promises and counter-promises, of chafferings and bargainings, elect a president by a corrupted majority.

The executive, being thus elected, is the representative of the whole people. The governor of a commonwealth is, in the eye of democracy, the representative of its people, and, as such, is bound to watch over their freedom and protect their rights.

The president of the United States is, in like manner, the representative of the people of the United States ; and, as a faithful representative, he is bound to sustain the power of the people.

Hence it is, that, in the true spirit of democracy, the people have intrusted him with a tribunitial power. He is, by the constitution, the grand tribune of the people, possessing for the people the power of a VETO, bound to restrain the aristocratic tendencies of legislation, and to negative every law that interferes with the constitution, with freedom, with popular power. The corrupt and corrupting influence of a gigantic moneyed aristocracy was arrested by the tribunitial act of Andrew Jackson. The whole country, the world, now recognizes the justice of that act.

And this brings me to the great executive question of the SWORD and the PURSE.

If the sword is to be used at all, it must certainly be to execute the laws ordained by the people, and, when the sad necessity occurs, must be used by the executive. God forbid it should ever be used except in conformity to law, by those who are bound to execute the law ! But against its unjust use democracy erects barriers. In relation to individuals, a trial in open court, and a verdict by a jury, must precede the punishment of a capital crime.

As it regards the people, a legislative act must of necessity precede the use of the sword. Democracy, I have said, is reason ruling through the people. It therefore never can begin an offensive war; and, if it could pervade the civilized world, there would be an end of all wars. The sword would be beaten into the ploughshare and the sickle, and the din of arms would be hushed in the peaceful reign of justice. But as, in our imperfect state of society, the possession of arms is needed for self-defence, the employment of military force is forbidden except under an act of legislation. Thus the courts of justice, the people's jury, the legislature, the people themselves, stand between the executive and the wrongful use of the sword. I have no apprehension of tyranny, notwithstanding the governor in each New England commonwealth possesses the sword. Nay, rather, I hold it as an evidence of advancing civilization, that, in your state and in the United States, "the military is, in all cases, and at all times, in strict subordination to the civil power."

In like manner, the executive must, by the very nature of the case, have from the public purse the moneys needed by the public appropriations. Who shall keep the revenue? Democracy answers, The officers of the people; those who are appointed for that purpose by the people themselves: if the people intrust the appointing power to the president, then the officers whom the president shall appoint under the constitution and the laws. The constitution of the United States is explicit on this subject; it declares, in emphatic language, that "no money shall be drawn from the treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law."

But this does not satisfy the aristocracy. That aristocracy wishes, in advance of appropriations made by law, to take all the public revenue out of the treasury of the people, and place it where it will be independent of the government, and therefore independent of the people. Yes, the wish is to take the revenues of the United States out of the power and control of the people of the United States, and place them, by a permanent law, in the custody of corporations, that, by their very nature, are the representatives of the aristocracy of wealth. The consequence of this is twofold. First, it gives to the moneyed interest, through the banks, a veto power on every executive act; for the irresponsible corporations may refuse to the United States the use of the public revenues. And next, by taking the public funds out of the custody of officers directly or indirectly appointed by the people, it of necessity creates an aristocracy, and places the treasury in the perpetual custody of corporations. We object to appointments for life; but this organization of the treasury implies a perpetuity of trust, conferred on bodies which, though they possess no moral life, would yet never die, if it were not that every unjust institution is essentially mortal. The effect is, in fact, to create, in connection with the treasury, a perpetuity of office-holders, and to neutralize and destroy a portion of the executive power by legislative enactments, in direct violation of the intention of the constitution.

Such, then, are the appropriate forms of democracy; all designed to give free course to the popular will.

III. The first and most marked, the characteristic TENDENCY of democracy, is towards improvement. Not bound down by experience, not satisfied with the results of the past, it is restless in its struggles after advancement in freedom, in equality, in public happiness, in the widest extension of the benefits of civilization. It longs for a brighter and a happier futurity. It does not believe that the legislators of old time have

established landmarks of civilization never to be carried forward ; on the contrary, it believes rather that the boundaries of civilization have been constantly advancing, and are destined to be yet more widely extended.

Such was the faith of Jefferson, and his public life was in harmony with it. His first act as a legislator was the expression of sympathy for the weakest and most oppressed — a demand for the freedom of emancipating the enslaved African. His first great act in the American Congress, was to write, in letters of light, the new doctrine of the independence of America, and to connect with that independence the great ideas of the rights of man. His proclamation to the world, on taking the oath of office as president, was, Freedom of Inquiry, and the Power of the People ; that is, the right to discover new truth, and to embody that truth in legislation ; and in his latest old age, beautiful visions of the future still floated before his eyes, and even to the hour of death, in the calm serenity that springs from faith in human progress, he gave up his spirit to God, from whom it emanated, with the tranquillizing words, “ Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.”

This constant hope of progress is denounced by our opponents as destructive of present institutions — a war against the past. But in truth, Democracy is not destructive ; she makes no war on the past ; she plans no overthrow of the present. On the contrary, she garners up and bears along with her all the truths that past generations have discovered ; she will not let go one single idea, not one principle, not one truth. She has an honest lineage ; she is, under God’s providence, the lawful offspring of advancing humanity, and she claims as her rightful inheritance the glorious inventions, the rich discoveries of the past. But Democracy does not, like the Egyptians, embalm the dead ; she does not bear along with her decayed institutions, errors that have inflicted on themselves their own death blow. She leaves the self-styled conservative to stagger along under the accumulated superstitions and wasting structures of past centuries, to totter under the piles of charters that have expired, of contracts that have been broken ; and she herself keeps on in her course, having for her companions all the noble institutions which rest, self-sustained, in their own integrity ; and for the guaranty of her success, the natural immortality of truth, and the ever-active providence of God.

I know that this faith in man’s advancement is, by many, esteemed visionary : I know that many of our opponents assert, that the immense difference between the favored classes and the toilsome children of labor, is the order of providence ; that the history of the future, like the history of the past, must show the largest number in a state of ignorance and suffering, and all the benefits of civilization the exclusive enjoyment of the few. The argument, as far as it regards society, is refuted by facts. Each year has given to humanity new trophies, in its effort to diffuse the benefits of freedom. At this moment, throughout our whole country, the highest activity prevails in the public mind to check, on the one hand, every tendency to exclusiveness in legislation, and, on the other, to assert, for every class of the community, its right to the equal benefits of our institutions.

But the faith in advancement admits of a nobler justification. It rests on the highest elements of morality ; is blended with all that is noble in human nature ; and, far from being the faith of fanatics and visionaries, we avow, as a part of our democratic creed, that this faith is essential to the character of a good practical statesman ; that every truly great legis :

lator is not limited in the action of his mind to experience, to examples, to decided cases, but acknowledges that there is an ideal which states and nations should strive to realize.

To any one who admits the distinctions of morals, this proposition is capable of demonstration. Politics, rightly considered, are morals applied to public affairs; for the providence of God is supreme every where; He is the God of nations, as well as the God of man. Now, then, go into private life. YOUNG MEN, you who are striving to build up for yourselves a pure fame, will you seek in those around you for the high ideal of moral worth? Shall the example of men around you, swayed to and fro by the passions of the moment, soured by disappointment, kindling with excitement, debased by desires, ever the dupes of their own selfishness; shall the example of beings, as imperfect as each individual of our race, constitute the rule of conduct? If it were so, there could be no such thing as striving after virtue; for no man is in himself a personification of virtue; no man has realized perfection. To establish, then, a rule of morality, deduced from the practice of individuals, has, for its necessary result, the abandonment of highest excellence, and substituting for it imperfect experience. Such a system would destroy all morality; would substitute human imperfection for the divine law, the actual passions of mortals for the bright though unrealized image of the divine man, which God has implanted in the heart.

The same is true of politics. Follow experience, you may renew monarchy, feudalism, the dominion of a selfish stock aristocracy. You necessarily vitiate legislation, by proposing in the outset to shape it after imperfect models. Democracy, on the contrary, seeks to represent to itself an ideal republic, possessed of all the qualities belonging to the social condition, in harmony with each other, and each adapted to its end. It is necessary for the statesman to have in his mind the conception of a perfect legislation; that he may thus, by the comparison, be constantly led to discover existing defects, and to move, if slowly yet certainly, in the paths of improvement.

The immediate tendency of democratic legislation is towards a true and full declaration of national independence,—a perfect relief from the last remaining bonds of the old colonial system, which was but a branch of the false mercantile system. That system founded commerce not on reciprocity, but on privileges secured by treaty or enforced by oppression, making commerce, which should be a pledge of peace, the fruitful parent of wars. This system was dominant in European politics for a century. Our declaration of independence was its death-warrant; and though it still lingered into the lap of a better century, it never could effect a reversal of its doom. When these United States began their existence as a nation, the traces of the false mercantile system were branded deeply into the code of every European maritime power. The principle involved in our very existence as a nation, was perpetually coming in conflict with the many European abuses which protruded themselves into our path, and attempted to block up our progress. For the nations of Europe to recognize a colony as an equal; for the monarchs and aristocracies of Europe to admit a democratic republic to equal influence in the interpretation of international law, implied changes in the European world as vast as those which were effected by our independence itself. England has not yet learned to respect our republic as her equal. The same spirit which, in the days of Washington, dictated its refusal to surrender the

north-western posts, inspires her counsels now in her arrogant usurpations on our north-eastern frontier. Aristocratic England has not yet learned a due respect for the Plebeian Republic, which is spreading her language from one end of the continent to the other. On questions of international law, democracy, asserting equality, and submitting, self-restrained, to the limitations of justice, tends towards establishing freedom of goods for free ships, and guarding a vessel on the high seas as a floating colony.

In like manner, democracy upholds American industry, and asserts its independence. In a former century, English legislation did, as it were, forbid all American manufactures in wool and in iron, and built up English industry by prohibitory laws. New England would at that time, in defiance of English competition, have succeeded in manufactures. Then, when there was no tariff at all, prohibitory laws were required, to restrain the active enterprise of our fathers. The consequence of this tyranny was American independence — not as a struggle for power to apply the same false system, but as an assertion of the right of freedom of enterprise and industry. A powerful party among us has attempted to renew the tariff policy of that old mercantile system, — a system which has never succeeded but in connection with the dominion of the seas; a system which, in its old intensity, has become impossible every where, and against which the current of advancing civilization is sweeping with irresistible energy. To trust the prosperity of manufactures to such an antiquated legislation, would be like building a fortress on the verge of a bluff, which the deep waters of the Mississippi had already undermined.

But the industry of New England has not only been led into this most dangerous position of leaning for support on a floating tariff, regulated by uncertain majorities, and modified by changing interests; it has been made a victim to the false financial system in which we have become involved, and which the spasmodic energies of the whole whig party are now summoned to maintain. I appeal to the manufacturers themselves; I ask only to be heard: let the manufacturers pronounce the verdict.

First, then, the United States Bank, concentrating its influences in our large commercial cities, and dealing immensely in foreign bills of exchange, having also its agencies in London and Paris, where it negotiated largest loans, was, by its very nature, calculated to stimulate commercial activity, and by its sympathies to sustain the interests of foreign manufactures.

Next, the surplus revenues of the government, increased by the high tariff, were loaned out, chiefly in the mercantile cities, to importing merchants; so that the very excess of duties, by occasioning fresh importations, accumulated evils alike on the American manufacturer and on the merchant, till the day of reckoning drew near, to spread sorrow and bankruptcy throughout the land.

Next came the disastrous expansion of our own currency. Our opponents extol the benefits of a mixed currency, and yet they resist all efforts to make even the least advance towards a mixed currency. You in Connecticut, we in Massachusetts, have not a mixed currency of specie and paper, but an unmixed currency, composed of paper alone. Specie has been banished almost entirely, except for purposes of making change. In consequence, while a high tariff, by its very nature, excluded the American manufactures from the foreign market, each protective tariff was, in succession, rendered nugatory at home; for, as the tariff was

advanced, the currency expanded, till in the fever of speculation and extravagant prices, the cost of production rose to such a degree, that the foreigner could pay the high duties, and yet compete with the American manufacturer in the American market.

Wide suspensions of specie payments have occurred twice already ; and these again operate ruinously on the manufacturer. If, in the time of suspension, he borrows, he must give his notes at par, and receive a depreciated currency. If, now, the New England mechanic attempts to collect moneys due him south or west of New Jersey, he has no option but between a lawsuit and receiving payment in broken promises ; in other words, he must submit to a loss of ten per cent. on his dues.

But this is not all : This same unnatural mercantile system has been followed by immense public debts, and for these state scrip was negotiated abroad. But in fact the money was raised here at home ; England sent nothing in exchange for our hundreds of millions of stocks but more bales of broadcloths, larger importations from the workshops of Birmingham and Manchester. So true is this, that one of the agents for the sale of state stocks appealed to British capitalists in behalf of British manufacturers to participate in the loans. "*The capital borrowed by the United States*" — I quote the words of the agent — "*is transferred by bills from the banker to the merchant, and is taken to America, not in bullion, BUT IN BRITISH GOODS ; every investment made, while it adds to the income of the capitalists, swells the profits of the British manufacturer.*" Here is the cause of most of the recent distress. But for these disastrous loans, and the consequent flood of foreign manufactures inundating the country, the workshop of many a manufactory, which is now inactive from the impoverishment of its owner, would have still been the happy scene of contented, prosperous industry.

And now, when it is proposed to assume the state debts, this branch of the whig financial system also menaces intense suffering to the American manufacturers. Were the assumption to take place, it would stimulate the mercantile interest once more to extravagant importations, thus consummating the wreck of our domestic industry, and producing in our cities all the embarrassments consequent on excess of commercial action.

But when I hear men assert that the interests of labor are bound up inseparably with the unstable character of our currency, my heart bleeds within me at the thought of the monstrous deception which is attempted. The argument, stripped of its sophistry, is this : High wages can be maintained only by the present elastic credit system ; therefore, take care of the banks, and by so doing you take care of the laboring class.

Again : It is said Spain, and Germany, and Italy, are hard money countries ; America is a paper money country. Therefore, restrain the licentiousness of our present credit system, curb the arbitrary power of the banks over the currency, and the American laborer would be as wretched as the Spanish, the German, or the Italian laborer. So indifferent are the whigs to popular freedom and popular education, they can see no difference between Italy and New England, except that Italy has no banks of circulation, and that New England has them thick as the fallen leaves in autumn.

These arguments need only to be stated, in order to expose their fallacy ; let the harmlessness of such false appeals teach our opponents respect for the intelligence of the people.

But is it seriously apprehended by any that an increase of specie in

the circulation would unreasonably depress the wages of the laborer? The laboring class in the United States is not dependent on banks, but rests self-sustained and is safe for three causes: 1. The laboring class is not in debt, and therefore has no sympathy with speculators and men who seek wealth without labor. 2. The nation has a vast domain, where most fertile land is always open to the purchaser at moderate prices; where the industrious squatter can, without aid from paper money, achieve an independence. 3. Our currency is alternately contracting as well as expanding. By drawing nearer to the true specie standard, depression is guarded against, even more than its opposite; and steady prices, a sure market for manufactures, and a uniform demand for labor, would be the consequence. The pendulum swings too far each way; the tendency of democracy is to repress the extravagances from which speculators alone reap benefits, and to guard against the depressions which at last spread through the land, dismissing the laborer from his employment, diminishing the prices of produce, and carrying grief into the families of the independent manufacturers, whose hearths, but for our unstable currency, would have been gladdened by an honest competence.

And now I turn on the men who make a pretence of contending for the laboring classes, when, in fact, they are pleading the cause of large corporations; and I say, *the tendency of democracy is toward the elevation of the industrious classes, the increase of their comfort, the assertion of their dignity, the establishment of their power.* This cannot be done by any system of artificial legislation; for of that the great corporations will always appropriate the benefits. The large corporations, it is true, are forever calling in the laboring classes to advocate their demands for monopoly; Tom Thumb fights the battle, but the giant takes the spoils. The laboring classes can be elevated only by a system of equal laws. But I go farther: nothing so much retards their progress as the vices of our currency, which expands when rising prices require a check to enterprise, and contracts when falling prices make credit most desirable; which, at one time, excites fallacious hopes, by creating a sudden and unnatural demand for laborers, and, at another, sacrifices their happiness and abruptly turns them off by double scores.

My bosom swells with indignation, when I find men commanding to the affections of the laboring class the very evils in our currency which inflict on them the most vital injury. I stand amazed at the desperate recklessness of the ambition which, for the vain hope of political success, can hazard the prosperity of every independent manufacturer in the land, by striving to keep up a little longer the delusion which has already been productive of so much misery. I feel a summons to go out among the people, and to denounce the fallacies of these false appeals. But a moment's reflection restores tranquillity. God has implanted the gift of reason in every breast; and, let the new panic-makers attempt, as loudly as they will, to prove that, in a free country, where the people govern themselves, unless arbitrary power over the currency is given to the banks, the people will be as degraded and as impoverished as in a despotism;—against this sophistry there is a living and an eloquent witness in the breast of each one of the myriads of the producing classes. I call on the laborer himself to pause and reflect; and his own mind will whisper to him full replies to the artful appeals of aspiring statesmen, who, pretending to advance his interests, are, in reality, the advocates of the maxims of aristocracy.

It is the observation of the tendencies of legislation, that gives a deep faith in the wisdom and security of the policy of the present national administration. It is not a policy suddenly devised, but the ripe offspring of time ; the centuries bear witness to its seasonableness and its virtues. The providence of God is over all his works. He controls the destinies of nations ; and, whether men desire it or not, his decrees are fulfilled. Our independence was the first great movement in the progress of a reform, which is penetrating the codes of every civilized nation on the earth. It is by a calm acquiescence in this direction, by a willingness to act in harmony with the tendencies of civilization, that the national administration has sustained itself, and will continue to do so. It did not create its system ; it did but adopt the policy, which the spirit of the age, the genius of advancing humanity, inspired. It brought to the work integrity and sagacity, prudence and courage ; but the work itself was marked out by the designs of a Power higher than that of man.

The effects of that system will be wider than the borders of our own land. It will break the last bonds of the colonial system throughout the world ; it will compel every nation which has colonies to emancipate them, that is, to give them either independence or equal laws. By fires from our hearths, the redeeming spirit of democratic freedom shall yet kindle its light on the banks of the St. Lawrence, and beyond Lake Superior, on Hudson's Bay and Nootka Sound.

The night would wear away, and the stars of morning vanish into the sky, before I could enumerate all the methods in which democracy tends to effect the happiness of the nation.

By cultivating the power of reason, it diminishes alike the frequency of crimes and punishments.

It tends to order and security of property ; for, by reconciling legislation with justice, it invokes always the energy of conscience, and gives to public law not the force only of an arm of flesh, but that infinitely higher power, the force of moral opinion.

It tends to equality ; for, by founding government on reason, it is pledged to recognize the equal claims of all who are endowed with reason.

It tends to promote education ; seeking to make a common stock of the stores of intelligence, the fruits of mind, which, far from being diminished by being shared, are increased the more rapidly, the more widely they are diffused.

Once more : The tendency of democratic truth is, to inspire not only a confidence in itself, but a confidence in its success. We believe in democratic truth, and we believe also in the overruling providence of God. The ultimate prevalence of the right is therefore certain ; for, while every error is essentially mortal, and every wrong, of necessity, in the end avenges itself, justice partakes of the Divine immortality, and is destined always to outlive and to rise above its adversaries. This hearty confidence forms one of the most striking contrasts between the two parties that divide the country. When a series of apparent reverses seemed, a year or two ago, to promise the national ascendancy to the whigs, I never met with a democrat who despaired. It was my lot to be present in Washington during the extra session ; and among those who resisted the immense influences that were directed against the measures required by the best interests of freedom and the country, no one was more conspicuous for manly integrity, for a clear perception of the merits

of the questions at issue, for an energetic, able, and unflinching support of the truth, than the distinguished citizen, to whose honored name you have assigned the most conspicuous station in your coming contest. The country applauds your choice; for in him you have a statesman whom prosperity could never elate, nor the heaviest gloom appall. True to his principles, he has within himself a calm which the fury of his assailants cannot disturb, and which, indifferent to personal considerations, can never despair of the triumph of the democratic principle. On the other hand, our opponents regarded the apparent changes in their favor more as an unexpected accident, than as a natural and necessary consequence of sufficient causes; and thus, accepting this shadow of power, clutched at this semblance, which proved, after all, to be only a lifeless spectre. On the slightest show of a victory, they are almost as susceptible as a person in a hectic; and if a state is unexpectedly carried, they cannot find at any foundry letters large enough for their handbills.

The democratic party is not indifferent to the successful efforts of its friends; but it does not express its exultations by staring capitals, or intoxicating revelries, or empty noise. Its pleasure is of a deeper and a heartier kind. It recognizes a victory as an expected event, and hears of success with that pleasure with which you would, on a fine summer's morning, watch the glorious coming of the king of day, rejoicing in the east, cheering the nation with his beams, and yet an expected visitant.

The pleasant news of success will soon flow in upon us from the north. The glad voices of successful New Hampshire come not as a strange message, but like the pleasant murmurings of the winds, in the month of June, singing forth their ancient melodies among the bursting flowers and the fresh foliage of the forest. And Massachusetts also has reconciled herself to the principle of popular rights: her election of MARCUS MORTON, the pride of her democracy, is the homage of a commonwealth to truth; it is the offering of a state on the altar of patriotism; it is the throbbing of the mighty heart of a people, sending the beautiful life-blood of freedom through its whole body politic.

Young men of Connecticut! it is not enough that democracy is victorious around us; let it be victorious here. Here, where the struggle is the hardest, a triumph must be achieved.

There never was a period when your exertions were more needed, or were more sure of being crowned with the widest and the happiest influence. If I read rightly the signs of the times, it rests with you to unite New England in one close array on the side of the democratic principle. I own myself animated with the pride of a New England man; I exult in the land of my nativity; I glory in the intelligence, the frugality, the integrity, the industry, of our portion of the common country. The lines of our lives have fallen to us in pleasant places; we have a goodly heritage in the institutions, the habits, the caution, and the bold enthusiasm, that come down to us from our fathers. And I fondly believe that the open union of New England on the side of the democratic principle, would not only leave most glorious traces of its power on the legislation of the Union, but would hasten by a generation the progress of liberal opinions throughout the globe.